

THE CURE

Leave it a bit, he said,
that hole you worry at,
and so I left it, and
after a while began to feel
that, if not healed, it was
grown over with the spiky
grass that long, dry summers
bring. In bed at night
I would imagine it (almost
concealed) the way we buried
treasure in our childhood games
and, growing confident, there
were days when I could say
it was no longer there; and
nights when I could dream
of other things. Yet it
surprised me when I found
a sense of loss had grown
about it: the days seemed longer,
emptier, and so entirely free
of pain it was as though
a part of something I had
called myself had gone. There
was a night when, sleepless
with a lack of purpose, I
began to probe the wound again,
prising apart the grasses which
had matted like protective skin:
at first it would admit only the
thin tip of my smallest finger—
yet even this became a kind of
triumph!—and, perservering through

a slow decade, I broke resistance
down until my whole hand
could explore it. Now
I thought I would recall the pain
that such exposure of a broken surface
brings, but was disgusted when I found,
at the deepest part of its dry heart,
a nest of dead, black chrysalids
that never would grow wings.

WHEN MY FATHER DIED

On the day my father died
all the hoops in the neighborhood rang
skate wheels shrilled on summer pavements
and I in my blakey boots clanged one foot
in each gutter,

On the day my father died
girls were running autumn-eyed, with wild hair
and hands of silk; peg-tops had come round again
and in the sky the angels were as plain as wings

But on the day my father died
white faces fell from every window
and every house found rooms of tears to hide
while I, joy-jumping, empty eyed sang on the day
my father died

Now my father dies a little every day
And the faces from each window grow like mine.

Edwin Brock.